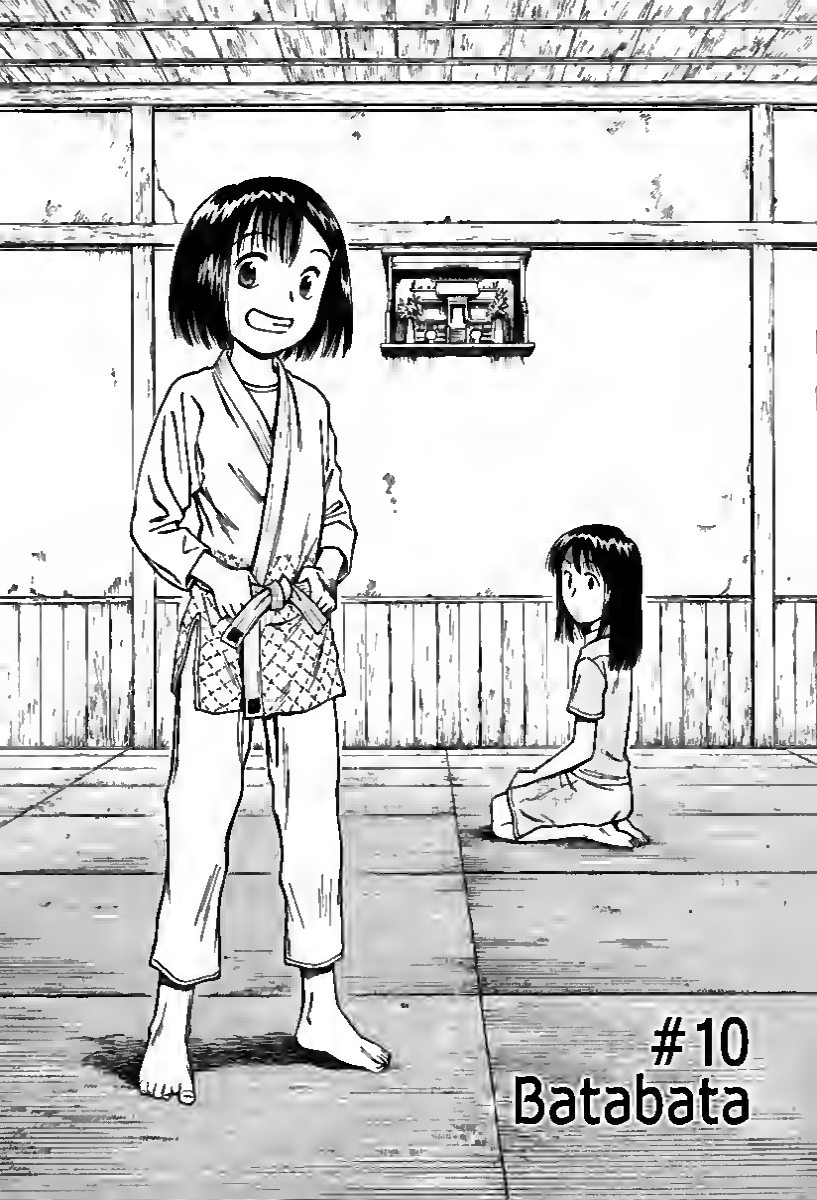

#10
Batabata

GOOD MORNING! IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME!
IT'S SUMMER SO WE WENT TO VISIT MR. OUGAKI, A FRIEND OF GRANDPA'S.
THANK YOU FOR HAVING US.
MISTER OUGAKI IS THE HIGH PRIEST OF HIE SANCTUARY WHICH IS RIGHT ACROSS HIS HOUSE.

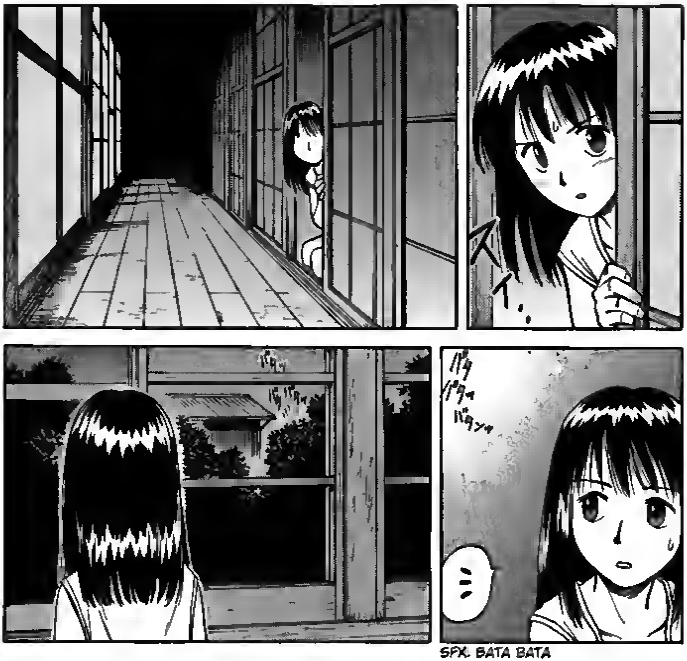
SINCE I COULDN'T VISIT YOU FOR THE NEW YEAR, THAT MAKES ALMOST ONE YEAR THAT WE HAVEN'T SEEN EACH OTHER!
YOU SURE GREW UP, MIZUKI!
THHEIR ONLY DALIGHTER, KAORU, A SECOND YEAR STUDENT WE'VE KNOWN HER SINCE WE WERE YOUNG...
SHE'S BEEN PRACTICING JUDO FOR QUITE A WHILE.
SHE GETS WELL WITH MIZUKI WHO IS ALSO GOOD IN SPORTS.
MY MOTHER PREPARED WATERMELON
SO LET'S HURRY UP AND GET INSIDE! ARE YOU COMING, SHIZURU?
AH.. YES!

Manga Syndrome
Translator/Editor: Rebel

.....
I WONDER WHAT KIND OF TROUBLE SHE'S HAVING
THIS IS THE ROCK THAT I'VE TOLD YOU ABOUT
ACTUALLY, YES.
AND YOU'VE BEEN HEARING STRANGE SOUUNDS DURING THE NIGHT...
YES, THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME ...
SO WE DECIDED TO KEEP IT HERE AND SINCE THEN, STRANGE THINGS HAS BEEN HAPPENING.
ONE OF THE SANCTUARY'S LOYAL GOERS BROUGHT IT TO ME. HE SAID HE HAD A BAD FEELING ABOUT IT.

Pwaam
WE TRIED PURIFYING IT BUT IT'S NO USE.
.....
THIS ROCK IS MOST CERTAINLY POSSESSED.
I KNEW IT.
HOWEVER, I STILL DON'T KNOW WHETHER THIS IS REALLY THE CAUSE OF ALL THOSE THINGS.
WITH YOUR PERMISSION, I'D LIKE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXAMINE IT.
OF COURSE

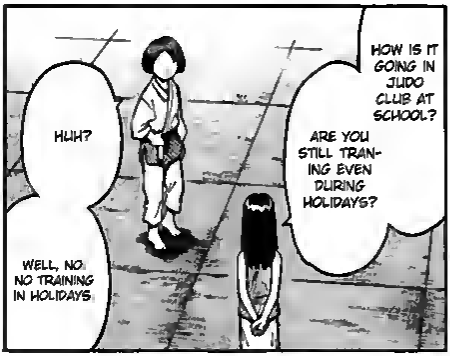
SFX. BATA BATA
バタバタバタッ
バタン
バンッバタン!
バタバタバタッ
バンッバンッ
……
IS THIS THE SOUND OF WIND?
バタンッ
バタンッ
コツ
コツ
SFX. BATA BATA
バタバタバタバタッ
!
ざわっ

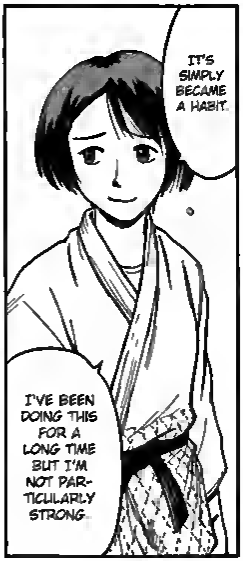


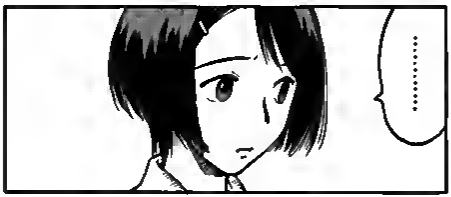
SFX: BATA BATA

SFX: BATA BATA

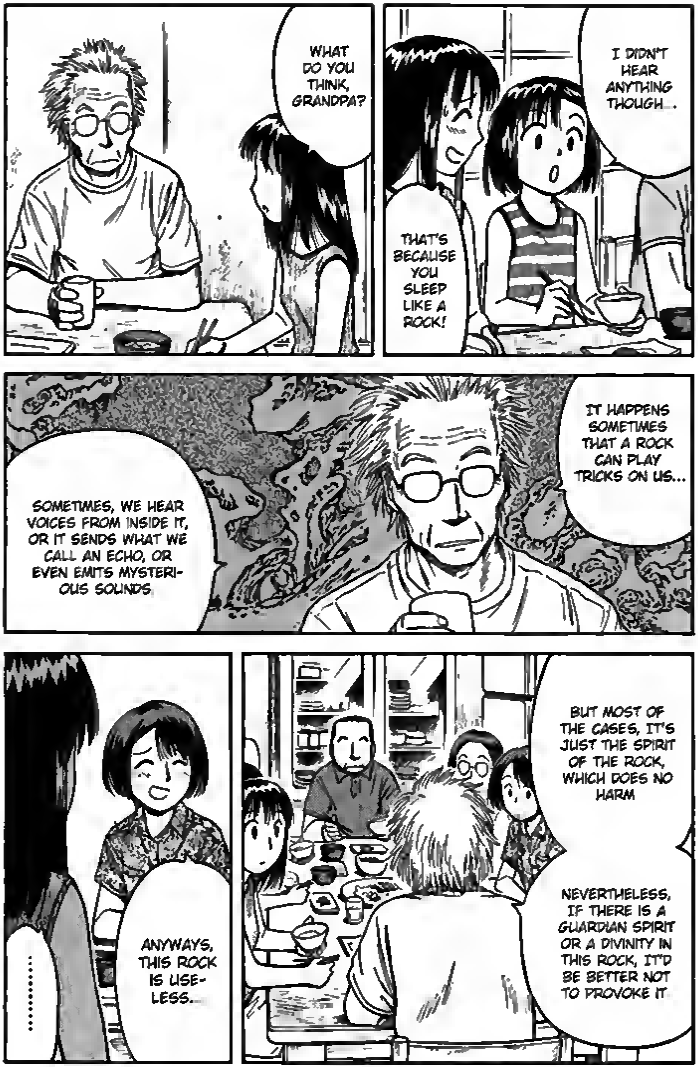
THE OUGAKI FAMILY HAS A DOJO AND KAORU'S FATHER, WHO IS A JUDOKA, USED TO TEACH JUDO.
OH, SHIZURU
KAORU TRAINS HERE SINCE SHE WAS VERY LITTLE.
YOU STILL TRAIN EARLY IN THE MORNING I SEE.

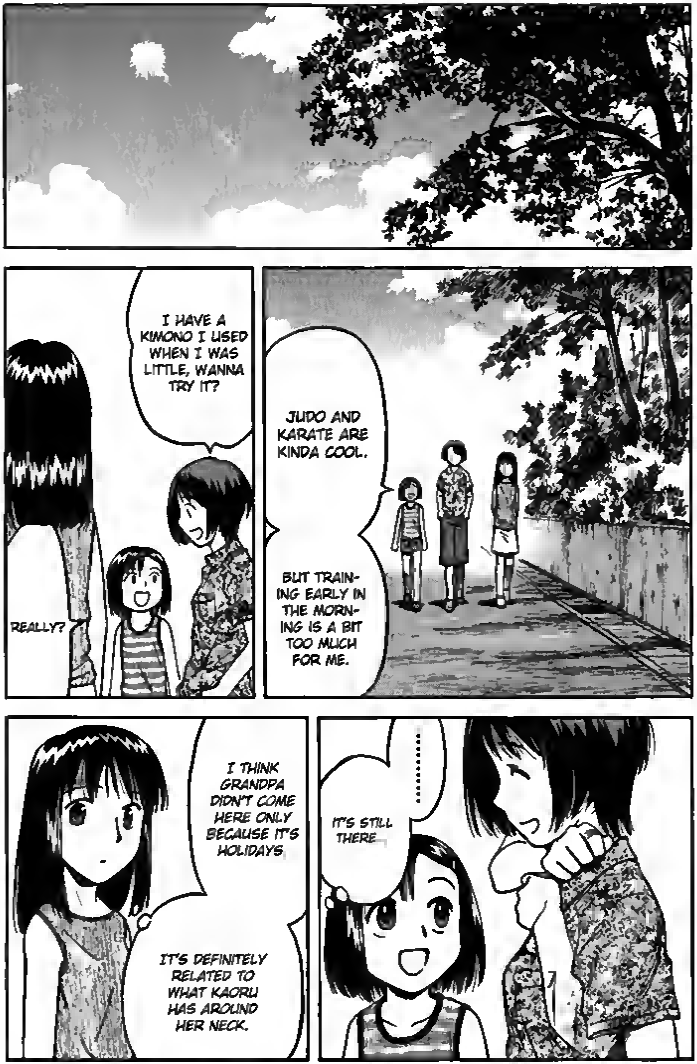

HOW IS IT GOING IN JUDO CLUB AT SCHOOL?
ARE YOU STILL TRAN-ING EVEN DURING HOLIDAYS?
HUH?
WELL, NO. NO TRAINING IN HOLIDAYS.


IT'S SIMPLY BECAME A HABIT.
I'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR A LONG TIME BUT I'M NOT PAR-TICULARLY STRONG.


.....

BY THE WAY, SHIZURU
HAVE YOU HEAR STRANGE SOUNDS LAST NIGHT?
AS IF SOMEONE IS HITTING SOMETHING...
AH, YES...
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
I THOUGHT SO..
REALLY?
IT'S BEEN LIKE THAT SINCE YOU HAD THAT ROCK...
YES!
I'M SURE IT'S THE CAUSE OF IT..


WHAT DO YOU THINK, GRANDPA?
I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING THOUGH...
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU SLEEP LIKE A ROCK!
IT HAPPENS SOMETIMES THAT A ROCK CAN PLAY TRICKS ON US...
SOMETIMES, WE HEAR VOICES FROM INSIDE IT, OR IT SENDS WHAT WE CALL AN ECHO, OR EVEN EMITS MYSTERIOUS SOUNDS
.....
ANYWAYS, THIS ROCK IS USELESS...
BUT MOST OF THE CASES, IT'S JUST THE SPIRIT OF THE ROCK, WHICH DOES NO HARM
NEVERTHELESS, IF THERE IS A GUARDIAN SPIRIT OR A DIVINITY IN THIS ROCK, IT'D BE BETTER NOT TO PROVOKE IT


I HAVE A KIMONO I USED WHEN I WAS LITTLE, WANNA TRY IT?
REALLY?
JUDO AND KARATE ARE KINDA COOL.
BUT TRAINING EARLY IN THE MORNING IS A BIT TOO MUCH FOR ME.
I THINK GRANDPA DIDN'T COME HERE ONLY BECAUSE IT'S HOLIDAYS.
IT'S DEFINITELY RELATED TO WHAT KAORU HAS AROUND HER NECK.
IT'S STILL THERE.

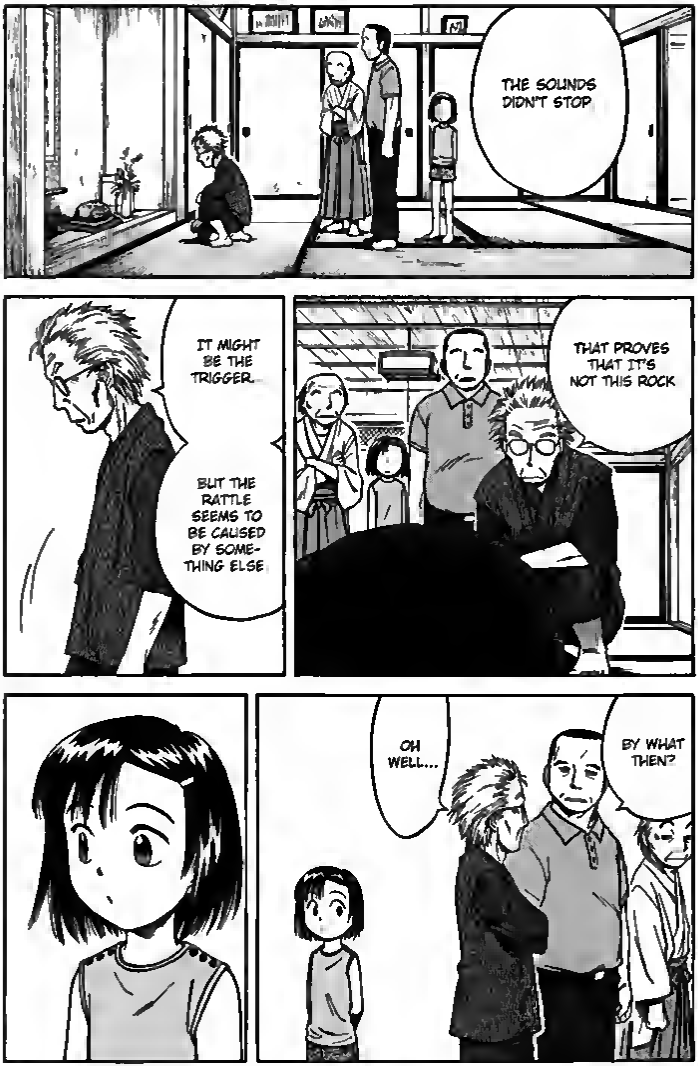
I'M SORRY, SHIZURU.
YOU CAME IN A BAD TIME.
AND WHAT'S MORE, YOUR GRANDFATHER HAS TO HELP US FIND THE CAUSE OF THESE MYSTERIOUS HAPPENINGS.
DON'T FRET IT.
KAORU..
YOU ALSO DON'T LOOK VERY GOOD..
ASIDE FROM THE STRANGE NOISES, YOU HAVE YOUR OWN TROUBLES, RIGHT?
HAHA
IT'S THAT OBVIOUS.
IN FACT...
I'M THINKING ABOUT QUITTING JUDO.

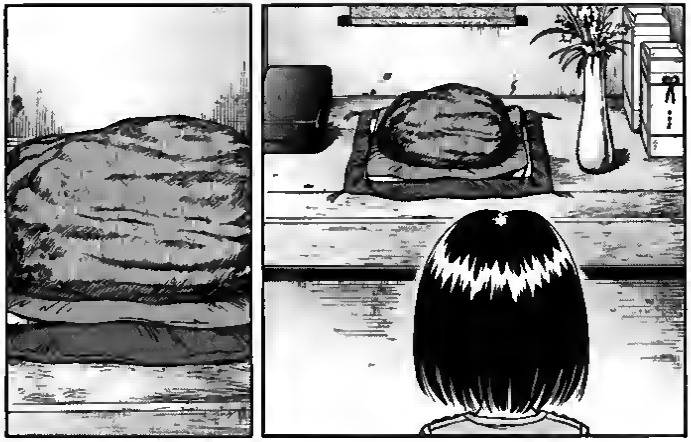
HUUH?!
WHY?
WHY DO YOU WANT TO QUIT?
I LIKE PRACTICING SPORTS FOR PLEASURE.
AND IT'S BEEN THE CASE FOR JUDO UNTIL MIDDLE SCHOOL.
IT'S JUST THAT.
I'M EXHAUSTED.
I DID MY BEST SO FAR...
THOUGH, DESPITE ALL THE YEARS OF PRACTICING, I'M STILL NOT STRONG.
BUT OUR HIGH SCHOOL RELIES TOO MUCH ON SPORTS AND SOMETIMES, IT GETS DIFFICULT...
ESPECIALLY, PSYCHOLOGICALLY SPEAKING.

YOU LACK ENTHUSIASM WHILE FACING YOUR OPPONENT...
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO WIN, THEN GIVE IT UP
SO MY MASTER TOLD ME...
IN THE PREVIOUS TOURNAMENT, I LOST AGAINST A STUDENT OF AN INFERIOR LEVEL.
I UNDERSTOOD ALL THAT HE SAID...
BUT AFTER THAT, MY MIND WENT BLANK...
AND I WONDERED WHY I WAS DOING JUDO
I DIDN'T ACTUALLY STOP. I CONTINUE TO TRAIN EVERY MORNING...
AND BECAUSE OF THOSE SOUNDS TOO .. MY HEART IS WAVERING...
DID YOU TELL YOUR FATHER?
NO, I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.
YOU MEAN THE SOUNDS WE HEAR AT NIGHT?
YES.

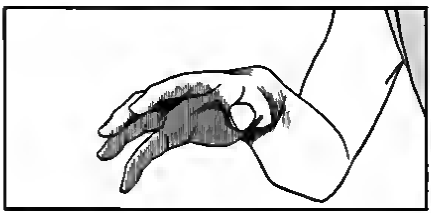
ACTUALLY...
IT'S SIMILAR TO THE SOUND OF TATAMI.
I TRIED TO CONTAIN THE SPIRIT HAUNTING THIS ROCK
WE'LL SEE HOW IT'LL TURN OUT TONIGHT.

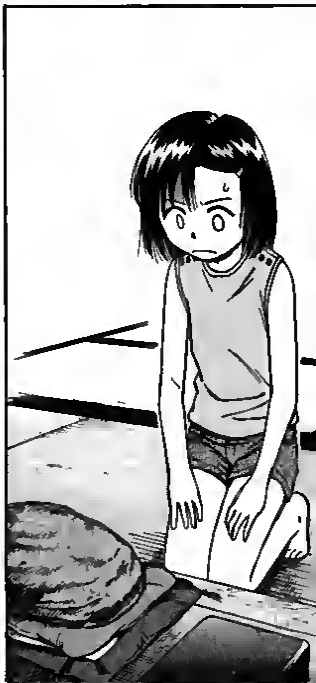
ALL SFX: BATA BATA

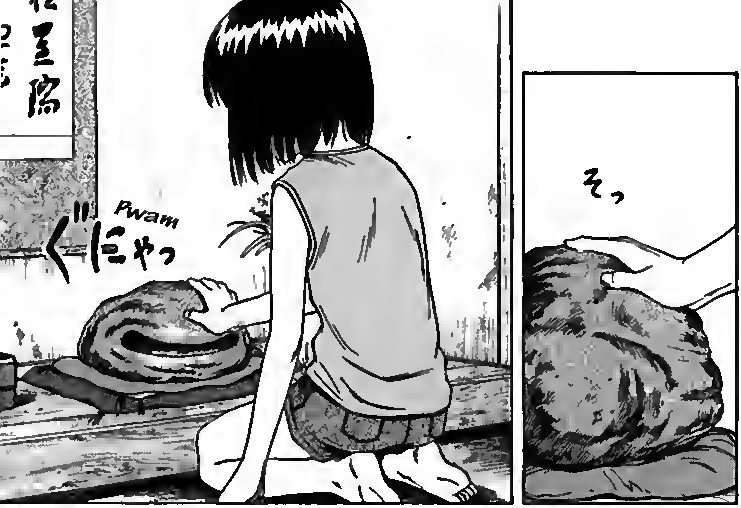

THE SOUNDS DIDN'T STOP
IT MIGHT BE THE TRIGGER...
BUT THE RATTLE SEEMS TO BE CAUSED BY SOME-THING ELSE
THAT PROVES THAT IT'S NOT THIS ROCK
OH WELL...
BY WHAT THEN?

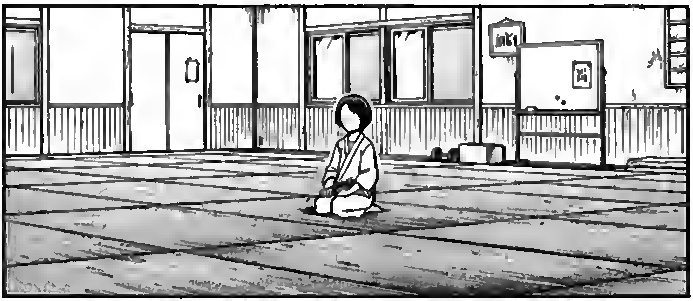


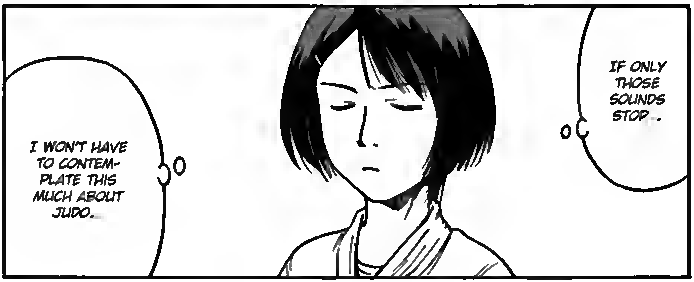
THIS IS STRANGE...
I FEEL A STRONG INCLINATION TO TOUCH IT...
UUH...





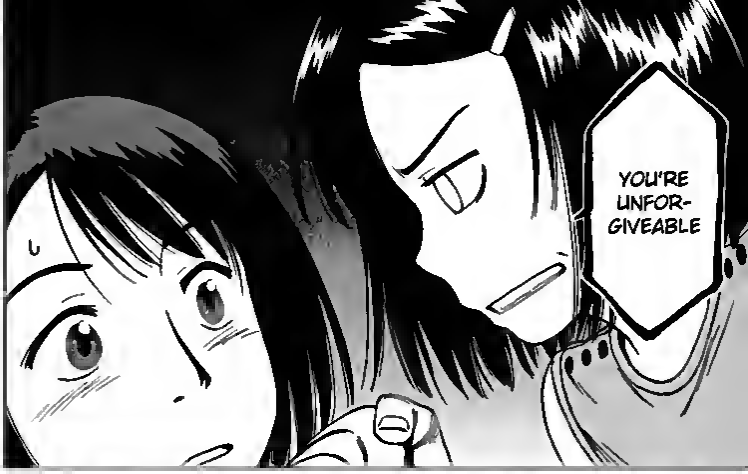

Pwam
そっ

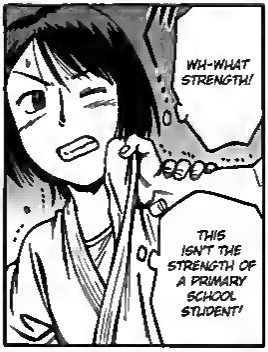


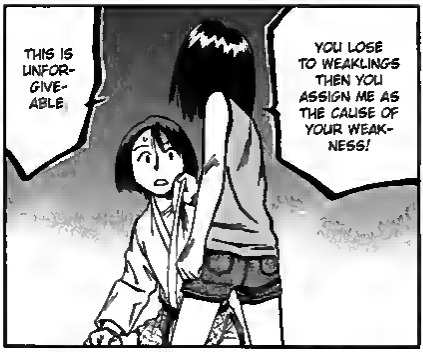

I WON'T HAVE TO CONTEM-PLATE THIS MUCH ABOUT JUDO.
IF ONLY THOSE SOUNDS STOP..

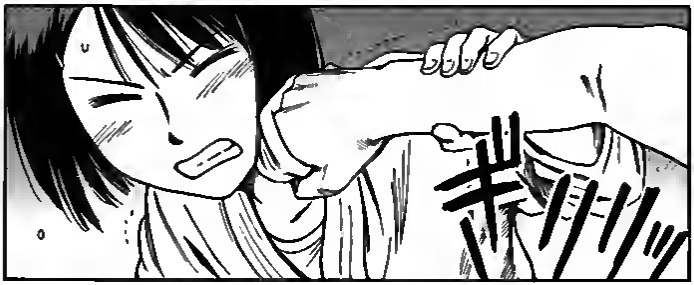
I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS AT SCHOOL ANYMORE, AND TRAINING HERE ISN'T HELPING EITHER..
EVEN THOUGH, I'VE TRIED TO FORGET IT...
.....
BE THAT AS IT MAY, I'VE DONE THIS FOR A LONG TIME...
..AH?
I SUD-DENLY FEEL RE-FRESHED?
スゥ
SUUU

……
MIZUKI?
ガッ
!
ダッ
ダッ

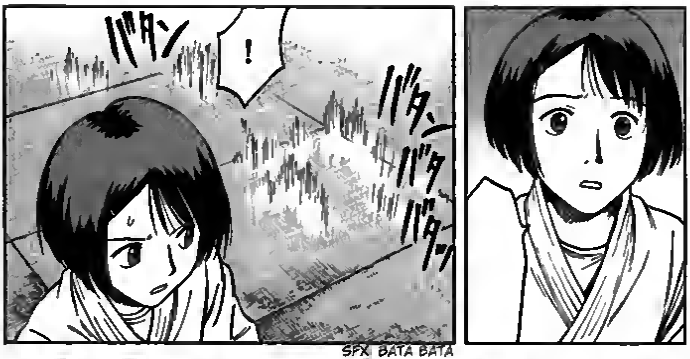

YOU'RE UNFOR-GIVEABLE


WH-WHAT STRENGTH!
THIS ISN'T THE STRENGTH OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT!

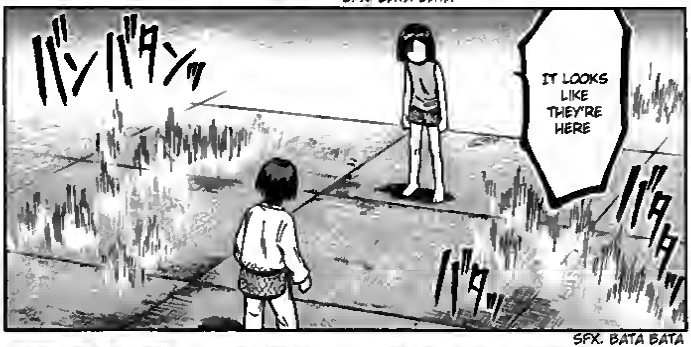

THIS IS UNFOR-GIVE-ABLE
YOU LOSE TO WEAKLINGS THEN YOU ASSIGN ME AS THE CAUSE OF YOUR WEAK-NESS!



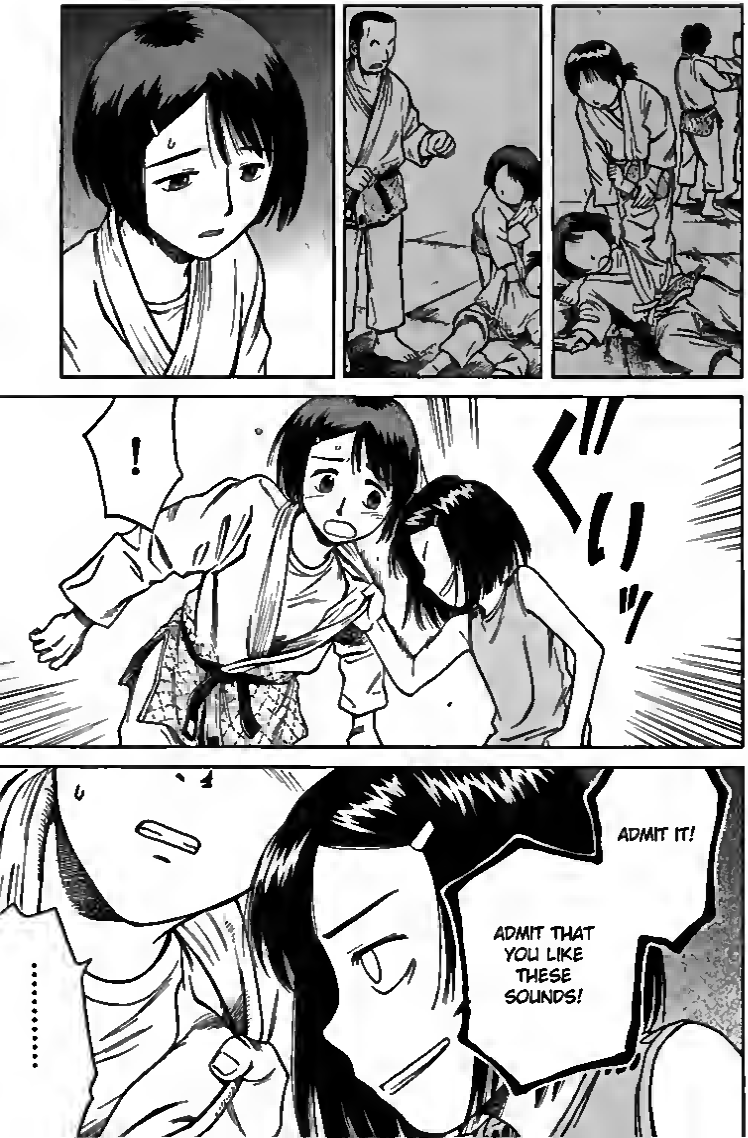
UGH!
I FEEL SO HEAVY
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
THE SANCTUARY THAT WAS DEDICATED TO ME HAS BEEN DESTROYED AND SINCE THEN, EVERYONE CONSIDERS ME AN ENEMY WHILE I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE WORSHIPED!
KNOW THAT I WILL NEVER FORGIVE YOU FOR BEING THIS WEAK!

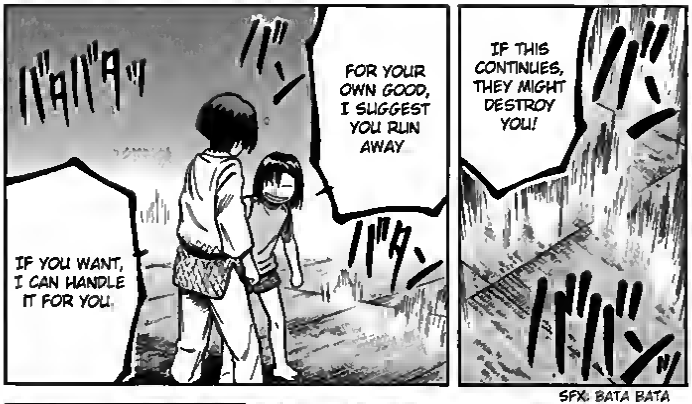


SFX. BATA BATA



SFX. BATA BATA


!
ADMIT IT!
ADMIT THAT YOU LIKE THESE SOUNDS!
.....



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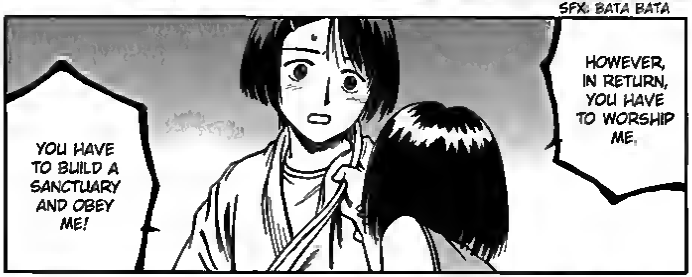
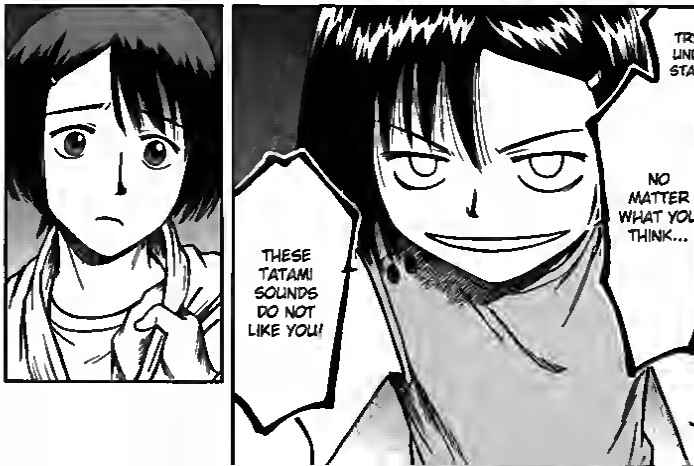
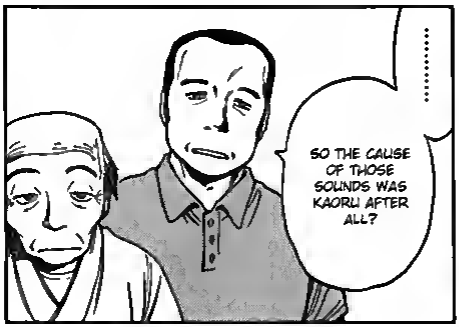
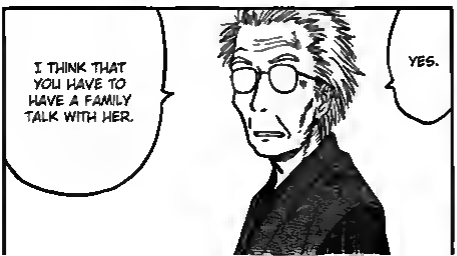




HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS?
WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
!

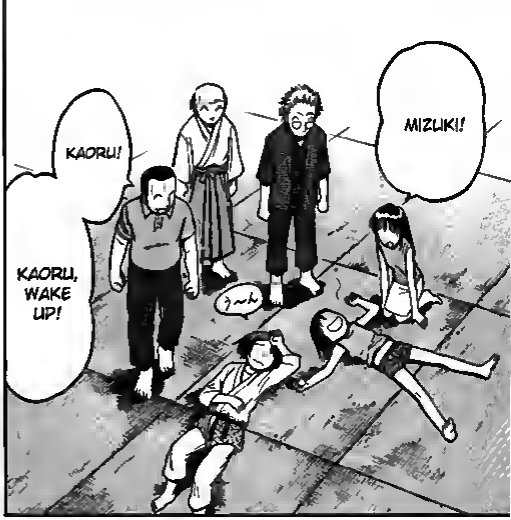

.....
SO THE CAUSE OF THOSE SOUNDS WAS KAORU AFTER ALL?

SATA


YES.
I THINK THAT YOU HAVE TO HAVE A FAMILY TALK WITH HER.

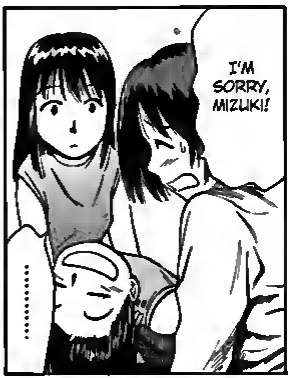
IT SEEMS THAT WE'VE GIVEN TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO THIS ROCK
INDEED...
BY SERVING AS A MEDIUM FOR THE SPIRIT SHE'S ATTRACTED, SHE FILLED THIS PLACE WITH HER OWN FEELINGS.
THIS ROCK WAS ONLY A TRIGGER AND ALSO AN AMPLIFIER.
AH, I SEE ...
GR-...
GRANDPA!

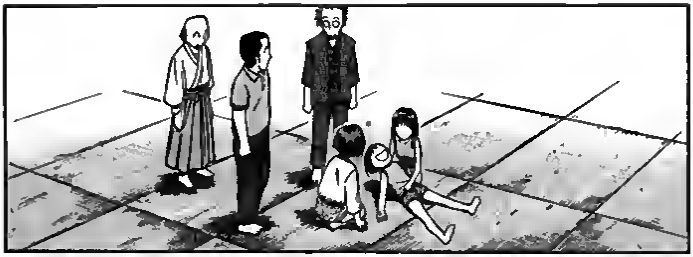
HM?
I REMEMBER THAT I...

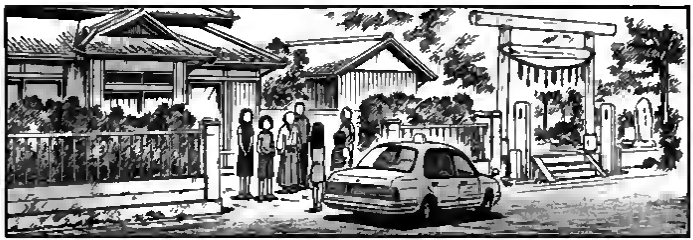

MIZUKI!
KAORU!
KAORU, WAKE UP!
うーん

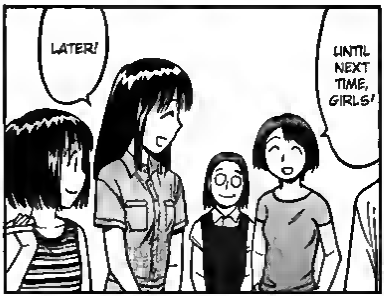
WAAA!
IT WAS I WHO THREW HER TO THE GROUND, RIGHT?!
きゅ～
WAAA AAAA!

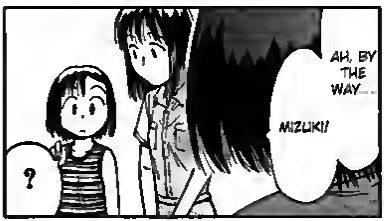
THE ARMS AROUND HER NECK
HAVE DISAPPEARED

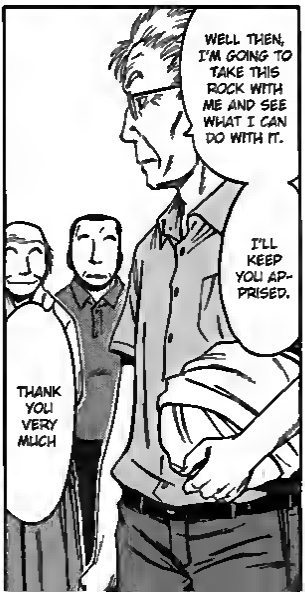

I'M SORRY, MIZUKI!
……






LATER!
UNTIL NEXT TIME, GIRLS!


AH, BY THE WAY...
MIZUKI!
?


WELL THEN, I'M GOING TO TAKE THIS ROCK WITH ME AND SEE WHAT I CAN DO WITH IT.
I'LL KEEP YOU APPRISED.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH

I THINK YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BECOME A JUDOKA!
YOU SHOULD GIVE IT A TRY!
TRUST ME!
O...
OKAY
?
SOMETIME LATER, WE'VE HEARD NEWS ABOUT KAORU.
I FELT A LITTLE LEFT OUT THIS TIME. I DIDN'T EVEN HEAR THE SOUNDS
NO, ON THE CONTRARY, YOU DID GREAT!
SHE QUIT THE JUDO CLUB OF HER HIGH SCHOOL...
AND JOINED A TOWN CLUB WHERE SHE CAN FREELY PRACTICE JUDO.